

The Growing Value of Vision: What Health Plans Need to Know about Delivering Eye Care

Findings from Versant Health's 3rd Annual Vision Wellness Study

Eye care is critical to whole-body health. Over the past two years, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted both the importance of and inequities related to accessing adequate care, including vision care, especially among people of lower socioeconomic status.

The good news is that **not only do consumers continue to see the importance of eye care services, but the value they place on vision care as part of their whole-body health is climbing**, according to the 3rd Annual Vision Wellness Study. More people are expressing interest in alternatives to traditional in-person care, such as telemedicine and online shopping for eye care, and are turning to their health plans for support.

The **Vision Wellness Study** explores how people's views of vision health are evolving and how they want help in closing the gaps in access to care.



The Rise in Virtual Vision Care Value & What It Means For Insurers

People's opinions of the value of vision care are rising, and virtual care options are leading the way in interest. These services are the "new normal" for insurers and their members, and they are here to stay. While consumers report fewer barriers to accessing eye doctors, they want clarity on their insurance coverage, which would increase the likelihood they choose insurance and vision care services.

65%

65% of all respondents say having **access to virtual visits/telemedicine** would make them **more likely to make an eye doctor appointment**

50%

Of those respondents who do not have vision insurance, 50% say being able to **use insurance to purchase eyewear online** would make them **more likely to purchase vision insurance** (vs. 41% last year)

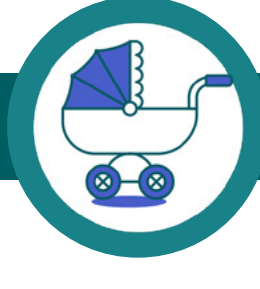
23%

Of those respondents who have received an eye exam in the past two years, 23% say **cost/affordability is the reason their household doesn't see an eye doctor as often** as they'd like (vs. 33% last year and 40% two years ago)

49%

Of those respondents who have received an eye exam in the past two years, 49% say better **understanding of what vision care services are included** in their benefits plan has a high impact on them **seeing an eye doctor more often**

Parents' vs. Working Adults' vs. Seniors' Experiences of Eye Care



When it comes to eye care, people with children in their household are highly focused on affordability and convenience.

- 58% of respondents with children in the household selected their specific eyewear provider because they accepted insurance, compared to the overall 49% of all respondents who selected their specific eyewear provider for the same reason
- 62% of respondents with children in the household say that being able to use insurance to purchase eyewear online would have a high impact on their likelihood of purchasing vision insurance, compared to just 45% of people without children in the household who say the same



Working adults under the age of 60 are most likely to seek out and prioritize convenience when accessing eye care.

- 73% of respondents under the age of 40 and 65% of respondents ages 40-59 say that having technology to access vision care services through virtual visits/telemedicine would have a moderate or high impact on the likelihood that their household members would see an eye doctor more often than they do now

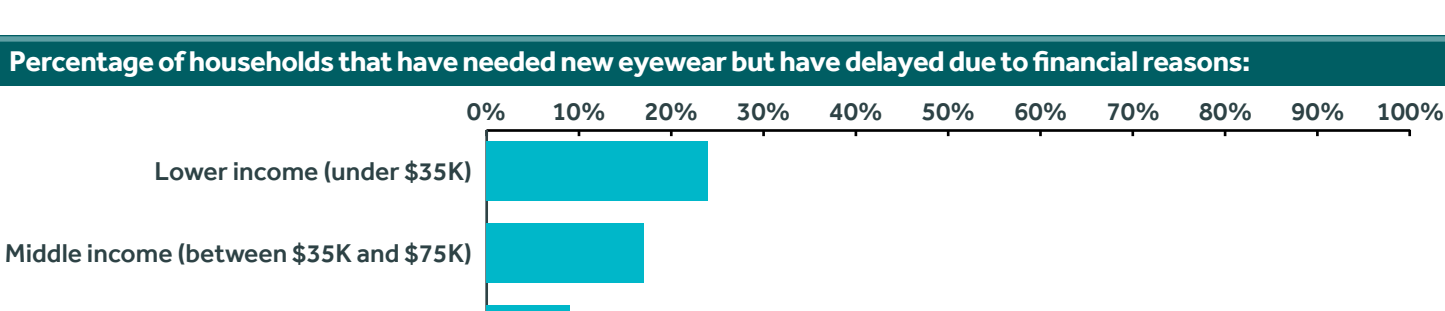
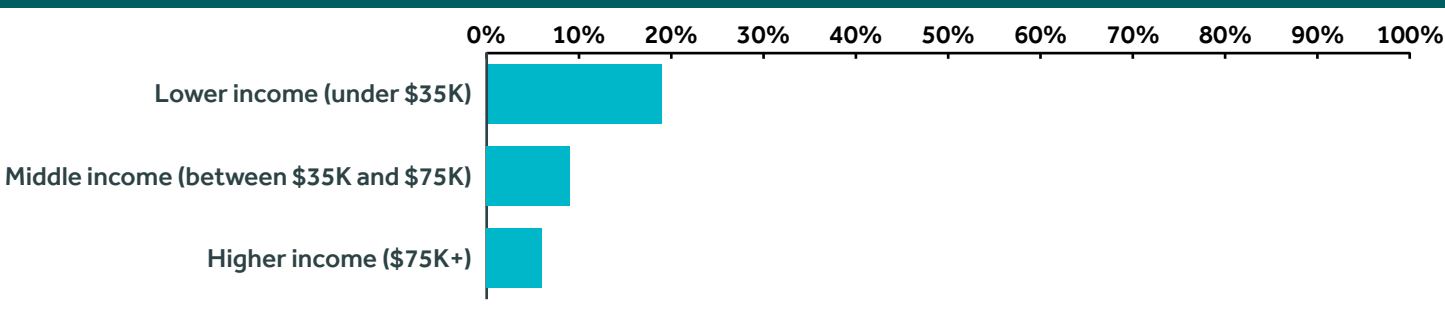


Seniors are visiting their eye doctor most frequently out of all age groups, using those visits as a means to check up on their holistic health—a concern that likely increases as adults age.

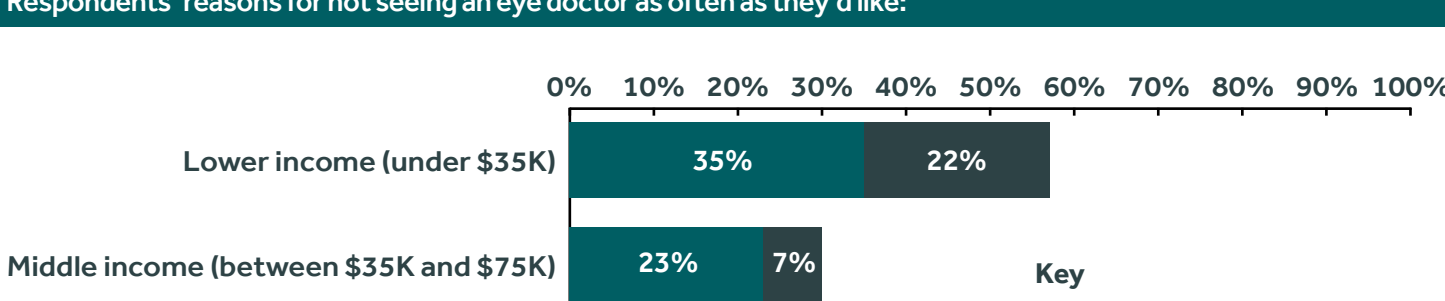
- 84% of respondents aged 60+ received an eye exam in the past two years (vs. 72% of respondents under 40 and 60% of respondents aged 40-59)
- 74% of respondents aged 60+ say that the ability to identify other serious health problems, such as diabetes, early-stage hypertension, etc., while visiting the eye doctor is of high value
- 62% of respondents aged 60+ say they regularly see an eye doctor to reduce healthcare costs, compared to only 42% of people aged 40-59 and only 30% of people under the age of 40

Social Determinants of Eye Health

Socioeconomic status significantly impacts health outcomes and access to care, with money and lack of insurance coverage presenting as the major barriers to vision care for lower-income households.



28% of lower income households say they don't have vision insurance that covers their eye care costs, compared to 15% of middle income and 9% of higher income households that say the same



Medicaid, Cost, & Convenience

Given that Medicaid and Medicare serve Americans with low incomes and older Americans in need of healthcare services, it may be no surprise that vision care's cost and convenience are of high importance to plan members.

20%

vs 15%

20% of Medicaid respondents said they have **needed new eyewear but delayed for financial reasons**, higher than the 15% of general population respondents who said the same

85%

vs 71%

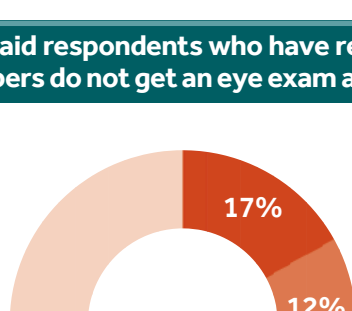
85% of Medicaid respondents say having **eye exams covered** would have a **high impact** on their **likelihood of purchasing vision care insurance**, compared to 71% of general population respondents who say the same

54%

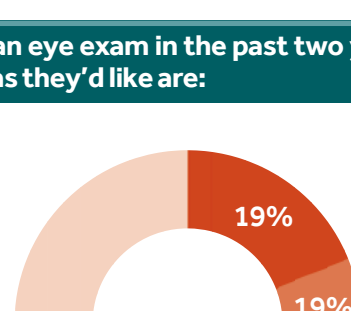
vs 46%

54% of Medicaid respondents who have received an eye exam in the past two years say getting information on **how to save money on healthcare through eye exams** would have a **high impact** on **seeing an eye doctor more often**, higher than the 46% of general population respondents who say the same

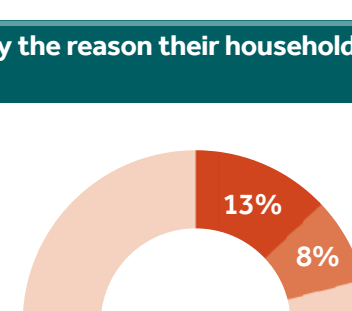
Medicaid respondents who have received an eye exam in the past two years say the reason their household members do not get an eye exam as often as they'd like are:



Cost/Lack of transportation



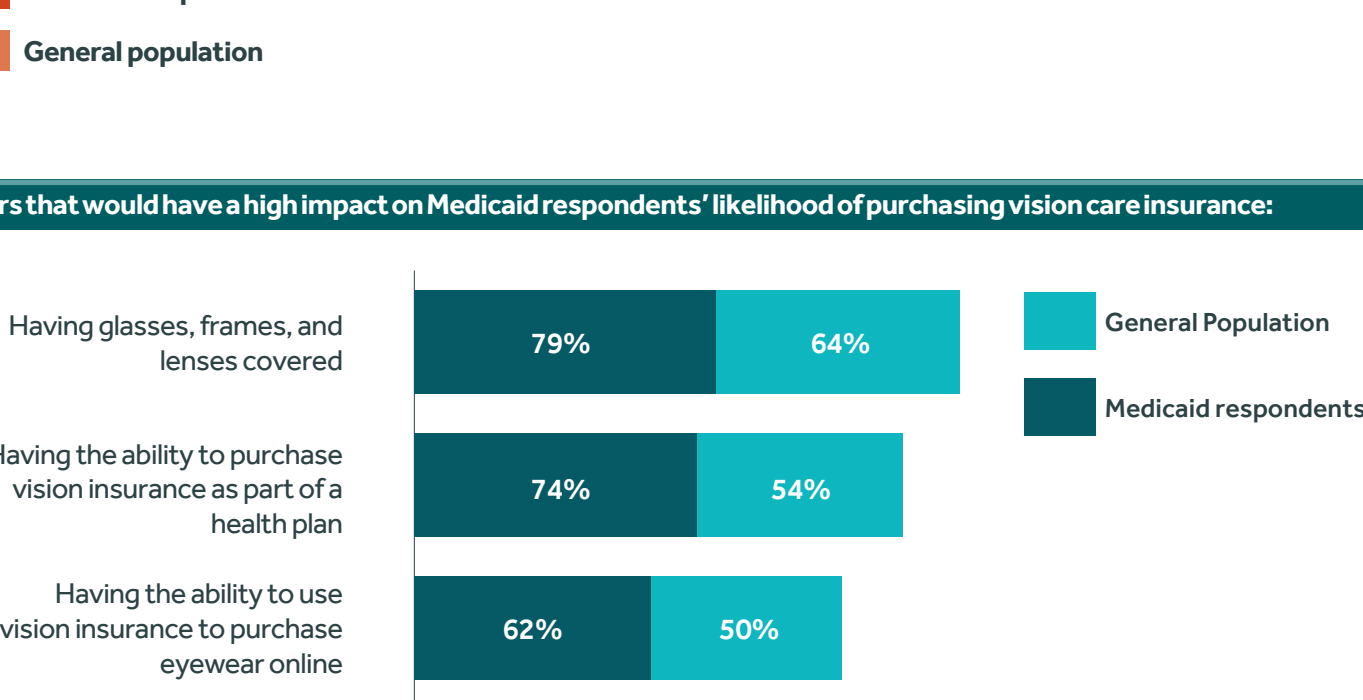
Lack of telemedicine option



Lack of clarity around whether they have vision insurance

Key
■ Medicaid respondents
■ General population

Factors that would have a high impact on Medicaid respondents' likelihood of purchasing vision care insurance:



Methodology

The Vision Wellness Study by Versant Health conducted online surveys fielded by Market Measurement, a custom market research firm, with 558 consumers over the age of 18 from February 7 to 18, 2022. They were asked their opinions of routine eye care, access to eye exams, preventative health measures, care costs, and other topics related to managed vision care and insurance.